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ABSTRACT

This paper reports results of a follow-up telephone survey of the job turnover rates of 20 male and 20 female day care teachers and 20 male engineers who had previously participated in a study of sex-role attitudes, behaviors and personality traits. (The teachers were initially matched for age, education and day care center, and the engineers were matched with the teachers for age and education.) The follow-up survey, conducted two years after initial contact had been made, revealed that only 30 percent of the male teachers had remained in the same setting and job status (compared to 50 percent of the women and 70 percent of the engineers). While 79 percent of the male teachers who had changed positions had relocated in human services roles, none of the engineers had left their field, and only 35% of the female teachers had left day care. The potential effects of male transiency on children in day care settings are discussed. The paper also reports the earlier study which compared the groups on sex role related personality traits, attitudes, and reinforcement behavior. (BH)

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An Assessment of Sex-Role Attitudes, Behaviors, and Personality Traits and A
Two-Year Follow-Up Study of Male Day Care Teachers

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An Assessment of Sex-Role Attitudes, Behaviors, and Personality Traits

Although the role of males in early education has been considered in the subjective literature since the 1940's (Kaplan, 1941; Tubbs, 1946), it was not until the 1970's that the empirical research addressed the issue of the effects of male teachers in early education.

Empirical research on the sex-role behaviors of male and female teachers in early education has resulted in two different trends. Results of studies employing female teachers and assessing their sex-typed contingency behaviors have been consistent. Female nursery school and day care teachers approved more of feminine behaviors in children (Etaugh & Hughes, 1975; Levitin & Chananie, 1972) and actually reinforced children for engaging in feminine behaviors instead of masculine behaviors (Etaugh, Collins, & Gerson, 1975; Fagot & Patterson, 1969; McCandless & Bush, 1975). On the other hand, when their sex-typed contingency behaviors were scrutinized, the males tended to administer more masculine contingencies when compared to their female counterparts (Etaugh et al., 1975; McCandless & Bush, 1975).

In view of these findings, educators have campaigned for the recruitment of more men in early education on the assumption that a strong male figure will circumvent the "feminized" environment of children (Burtt, 1965; Greenburg, 1977; Johnston, 1970; Kendall, 1972; Kyselka, 1966; Peltier, 1968; Sciarra, 1972; Triplett, 1968; Vairo, 1969; Williams, 1970). There is a major deficiency, however, in drawing this conclusion based on the few studies which exist. The major problem with previous research on sex-typed contingencies is that each of the studies thus far reported has employed male students who were part-time teachers as subjects. Consequently, some have argued that because these students had not actually adopted the role of caregiver or teacher as an occupation, they were not representative of those men employed in the field.

The present study was designed to circumvent this criticism by examining the caregiving behaviors of males who had chosen day care teaching as an occupation. Two fundamental questions were of specific concern: (1) How do male day care teachers compare with female day care teachers in similar settings? (2) Are male teachers more feminine in attitudinal dispositions and personality traits than males in other occupational roles, namely those traditionally defined as masculine?

Method

Subjects

The original sample consisted of 25 employed male day care teachers randomly selected from certified day care centers in the state of North Carolina. These men were teachers of children between the ages of two and five. Five of the male teachers withdrew from participation, leaving a remainder of 20 male teachers in the final sample. The male-dominated field of engineering was contrasted to the traditionally "feminine" occupation of day care. From a pool of 75 names drawn from the State Board of Registration for Professional Engineers, 20 male engineers were matched to the male teachers on age and education. A group of 20 female day care teachers was matched with the male teachers by day care center, age, and education.

Materials

Attitudes were measured by a checklist of 63 adjectives which were found to be sex typed for either males or females in a study by Williams and Bennett (1975). The Adjective Check List (ACL) (Gough, 1952) was employed to assess the self-perceived personality traits of the subjects. This checklist includes 300 behavioral adjectives from which the subjects selected those which were most self-descriptive. Nine of the 15 Need Scales on the ACL were employed to define masculine and feminine traits. Masculine personality traits were operationalized by raw scores on the Achievement, Dominance, Endurance, and Autonomy scales. Feminine traits were defined by raw scores on the Abasement, Nurturance, Affiliation, Suborance, and Deference scales.

A modification of The Fagot-Patterson Checklist (1969) was used to determine the sex-typed contingency behaviors of male and female teachers. The child behaviors used (Table 1) were derived from previous research in which significant sex differences in play preferences were observed using this scale (Etaugh et al., 1975; Fagot & Patterson, 1969; McCandless & Bush, 1975). The total number of reinforcers and punishers dispensed by the teachers for sex-typed behaviors was assessed. Reinforcers were defined as favorable comments or joining in a child's activity. Punishers were operationalized as teacher criticism or initiating new behaviors.

Procedure

Four observational sessions were conducted to obtain observer reliability data. Two observers had to give exactly the same code number of each observation to be considered acceptable. The observations were judged completed when one of the two observers recorded a total of 127 observations on each of the two scales (i.e., child behaviors and teacher behaviors). The percentage of agreement on the number of observed events was computed by dividing the smaller number of observed events by the larger number of observed events on both scales. Percentage of agreement on the number of observed events totaled 98 percent. The percentage of agreement on each scale was computed by dividing the number of events agreed upon by the total number of possible observations. The two observers were able to agree 90 percent of the time on the child behaviors and 98 percent of the time on the teacher consequences.

Once the mailed items, The Adjective Check List and the attitude check list, were returned by the teachers, an event-sampling procedure was employed for data assessment using The Fagot-Patterson Checklist. The teachers were observed in their day care centers until 12 contingency behaviors (i.e., reinforcers and punishers) were obtained for each. The code number for each child behavior and the corresponding code number for the teacher consequences were later combined into one of four categories: FR (reinforced for feminine behavior); FP (punished for feminine behavior); MR (reinforced for masculine behavior); MP (punished for masculine behavior).

Results and Discussion

The rate of return on the mailed items to 25 male teachers was 80 percent. Although the return rates on mailed items from the female teachers was 96 percent, only those items from females who corresponded to the day care center of the male teachers were used. Of the 75 male engineers who were sampled, 59 percent responded by returning all of the mailed items.

The results of the study are best described in terms of sex-role attitudes toward boys and girls, contingency behaviors, and self-perceived personality traits. The results of a one-way analysis of variance showed that all three groups maintained significantly higher masculine attitudinal preferences for boys but felt that girls should be equally masculine and feminine (i.e., androgynous) in their behavior.

To measure contingency behaviors, use was made of a repeated measures analysis of variance with one between-subjects factor (i.e., sex of teacher) and two repeated within-subjects factors (i.e., contingency behavior and sex type of behavior). Results in Tables 2 and 3 show an overall trend of more reinforcers being administered for feminine behaviors than masculine behaviors and more punishers administered for masculine behaviors than feminine behaviors. This trend held true for both male and female teacher groups. The reinforcing contingencies of the female teachers were congruent with those reported in previous inquiries (Etaugh et al., 1975; Fagot & Patterson, 1969; McCandless & Bush, 1975) in which females in early education were more likely to structure feminine environments for children. The reinforcing contingencies of the employed male teachers, furthermore, were also feminine in contrast to the masculine reinforcing contingencies of younger, male students observed in earlier studies (Etaugh et al., 1975; McCandless & Bush, 1975).

The similarity between the contingency behaviors of the male and female teachers corroborated the works of Brophy and Laosa (1971). They reported no significant differences in sex-typed behaviors of children after having a male teacher and concluded that the presence of a male teacher was of minor significance.

The data shown in Table 4 reflect the results of the one-way analysis of variance on personality traits. Note that the overall personality traits, that is, the M-F Scores of the male teachers were quite similar to those of the female teachers. The personality traits of the three groups fell on a continuum with the female teachers significantly most feminine, the male engineers significantly most masculine, and the male teachers falling in between but approximating the scores of the female teachers. The approximation, however, was not enough to be significantly more feminine than the masculine personality of the male engineers. It did seem, however, that this trend towards the cross-sex-typed personality may enable the male teacher to more comfortably perform the task of caring for children. Analysis of variance tests yielded significant differences on only three of the individual scales, each at the .05 level of confidence: Endurance, Achievement, and Succorance. The Newman-Keuls Test revealed that the male engineers scored significantly higher than the female teachers on both Endurance and Achievement. Note that all the individual scale scores for the male and female teachers were very similar. The locus of significance for the Succorance scale could not be determined by the Newman-Keuls Test.

Interviews were conducted with the 20 male day care teachers. Unlike men who traditionally choose their occupations for reasons of money, prestige, or power (Mason, Dressel, & Bain, 1959), 70 percent of the male teachers in this study reported that they entered day care because of altruistic concerns or the nature of the job itself. The men cited their love and enjoyment of working with children, satisfaction of intrinsic needs, appeal to the content of the day care program and curriculum, and desire to contribute something of value to this age group.

With respect to working in a field which is dominated by women, 70 percent of the males said they had no reservations. This finding was contrary to those findings from interviews of the adolescent males working in day care centers for

academic credit. The male students in that study reported feeling less "masculine" when taking directions from female teachers and said that they had no intentions of considering a profession in a female-dominated field (McCandless & Bush, 1975).

Two-Year Follow-Up Study

Two years after the initial contact, a survey was conducted to discern the job turn-over rates of the male and female day care teachers and the male engineers.

Method

Materials. The Follow-Up Interview Schedule for Day Care Teachers (FIST) was employed to obtain descriptive information from the three groups. The interview schedule was developed by the author to assess the current employment status of the male and female day care teachers. This information yielded a comparison of the turn-over rates among the men and women in day care and the male engineers. Questions regarding job satisfaction, reasons for job change, and new positions were also included. For those teachers who had left day care, the interview schedule provided data regarding the types of new jobs they entered.

Procedure. Each teacher was contacted by telephone and administered the interview schedule. Each respondent was categorized by job status in one of five ways: ORIGINAL SETTING, SAME STATUS (OS-SS), ORIGINAL SETTING, DIFFERENT STATUS (OS-DS), DIFFERENT SETTING, SAME STATUS (DS-SS), DIFFERENT SETTING, DIFFERENT STATUS (DS-DS), and INACCESSIBLE (I).

When subjects were designated as INACCESSIBLE, questions were directed to the directors of the day care centers in which the teachers had worked. A separate interview schedule matching the job status of the subjects was provided in the FIST. Once each subject was categorized by job status, the appropriate matching schedule was administered. Each male engineer was also contacted by telephone. They were merely asked their current job status and were classified in one of the five categories on the FIST. No additional data were sought regarding the male engineers.

Results

Contact rate. The contact rate by telephone for the 60 respondents was 96 percent. I was lucky enough to reach every male and female from the original sample except for two of the female teachers. They were classified as INACCESSIBLE, but some questions were directed to the day care center directors in which the women had worked.

Job status. During the two-year period, only 30 percent of the male teachers remained in the OS-SS Category. This is compared to 50 percent of the female teachers and 70 percent of the engineers. Seventy percent of the male teachers had changed to the DS-DS job status. None of the engineers had left the field, and only 35 percent of the female teachers had vacated day care. This finding was explained by poorer salaries, lower prestige, and little opportunity for advancement in day care, compared to engineering. When analysis was made of the jobs the male day care teachers entered, it was found that 79 percent relocated in human services roles. Examples of these positions were elementary school teacher, corrections officer, health-care technician, parent-infant trainer, and full-time graduate student in child development.

Discussion

In 1979, we have more male day care teachers than ever before. But the profession appears to be a transitory one for men. For this reason, it is questionable that men remain long enough to benefit children. In fact, the argument can be made that the disadvantages of not having males at all outweigh the advantages of having males for only short durations.

The high turn-over rate in the centers that have been studied indicate that children are receiving only short periods of exposure to these male models. The benefit of such short durations of exposure is questionable. Many children in day care centers are from one-parent families where the fathers are absent from the home. It is often argued that an important function of a day care setting is

to provide children with a stable environment. But this high turn-over rate only reinforces the pattern of male instability in the daily lives of these children. Rather than stabilizing their world, it could uproot it. If adult men in children's lives are constantly going and coming, it will be very difficult for the day care setting to become the stable environment that some children never get at home.

Summary

In summary, the findings reported here did not confirm the flood of impressionistic reports in the educational literature which claim that males should be employed to counterbalance the "feminized" environment in early education. The data indicated that the male day care teachers resembled the female teachers in terms of sex-typed attitudes, sex-typed contingency behaviors, and personality traits. Attitudinally, both male and female teachers reported they wanted boys to be masculine and girls to be androgynous. Their attitudes toward boys corresponded to the societal stereotypes, but their contingency behaviors did not. Both males and females reinforced all children for feminine behaviors. This contradiction between attitudes and actual behavior is not surprising since Mische: (1966), among others, has indicated that self-reports do not necessarily correspond with overt behavior. In regard to personality, the male teachers closely resemble the female teachers. This resemblance, however, was not considered enough to be any more feminine than the masculine personality of the male engineer.

It is not possible to determine whether the present findings suggest that there is something unique to males who enter the day care field or whether situational constraints induce their similarity to the female day care teachers. But some speculations can be offered for the findings which have been reported.

Situational constraints operating in the day care environment might induce the males' similarity to the female caregivers'. Male and female teachers have been "schoolled" or molded to conform to the function and controls of the school

environment (Lee, 1973). No matter how hard one tries to masculinize it, the world of day care is a feminine one by traditional societal standards. As neophytes in this field, at least one-half of the male teachers are conforming to the traditional procedures and routines which have been historically instituted and implemented by women. They believed that regardless of gender, competent day care workers would provide similar programs.

Another important variable explaining the feminine behaviors of the males is their personality type. They do not appear to persist at "getting ahead" as men in more "masculine" jobs such as engineering. These men may have a selected their jobs not for the usual reasons, but because of altruistic concerns--caring about children. Some children need help in learning to potty while others need to be held. They need lots of nurturance, warmth, and sensitivity from their caregivers. According to the research of Bem (1975) and Bem and Lenney (1976), these are tasks which a highly masculine male would either feel uncomfortable about performing or be incapable of carrying out. Other works have shown that males employed as day care teachers for research purposes felt very awkward and threatened; they responded negatively to actually entering the day care field because it is dominated by women (McCandless & Bush, 1975). It appears, then, that by definition the male capable of working with young children must possess some traits which have been identified as feminine.

Nevertheless, the importance of the male stereotype in early education has been portrayed in the media and professional literature. For example, in the past educators have emphasized the masculinity of men who choose to work in early education. The idea is conveyed that any male figure will serve to counterbalance the feminized world of child care. According to recent research (Bem, 1975; Bem & Lenney, 1976), however, it is the androgynous male who can more comfortably perform the traditionally "feminine" role of caring for the young.

All of the male teachers sampled in this study did not view their role as primarily one of modeling a male image for children. Many of them believed it is equally important to provide children with images of men in nurturant, warm, and intimate roles--roles traditionally assigned to females in our society. Perhaps their trend toward an androgynous personality type enables these males to more comfortably perform the task of caring for children. An explanation for the feminine contingency behaviors of the males might be that males attracted to the care and nurturance of children are predisposed to being more nurturant, less aggressive, and noncompetitive in their relationships. It follows that they allow the same behaviors to be expressed in children, while discouraging behaviors which counter these. A rationale, therefore, for recruiting men in early education is to combat sex-role stereotypes by modeling and reinforcing traditionally feminine qualities as well as masculine ones (Robinson & Hobson, 1978). The recruitment of androgynous men is especially important to break the stereotype, perpetuated in the literature and mass media, that the male is valued solely for his macho image.

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TABLE 1

SEX-TYPED BEHAVIORS BASED ON THE USE OF THE FAGOT-PATTERSON
CHECKLIST IN PREVIOUS STUDIES

Masculine Behaviors	Feminine Behaviors
1. Play at cornmeal table or sandbox outside (1)	10. Paint (1, 3)
2. Build blocks, build structures, set up farms and villages (1, 2)	11. Artwork: cutting, pasting, drawing with crayons or chalk (1, 2)
3. Hammer, pound (3)	12. Play with clay, playdoh, or other malleable substances (1)
4. Play with transportation toys (e.g., toy trucks, planes, boats, trains, tractors) (1, 2, 3)	13. Play in kitchen, large playhouse, or extended kitchen activities; rehearse domestic activities (1)
5. Play with steering wheel, dashboards, or parts of car (1, 2, 3)	14. Play with dollhouse (1)
6. Climb or hide in covered structures (e.g., pipes, barrels) (1)	15. Play with dolls (1, 2)
7. Ride trikes, cars, horses, skates, wagons, boats, and other moving transportation toys (1)	16. Look at books or listen to stories (1, 3)
8. Throw objects (e.g., ball, rocks), hit with an object, push, shove; run around room (2)	17. Sit; do nothing, wander, follow teacher around (2)
9. Use like-sex tools (2)	18. Help teacher (3)
	19. Swing, slide, play on teeter-totter, or bounce on tires (2)
	20. Dress in like-sex costume (2)

¹Derived from Fagot-Patterson (1969)

²Derived from McCandless & Bush (1975)

³Derived from Etaugh et al. (1975)

TABLE 2
MEAN SEX-TYPED CONTINGENCY BEHAVIORS BETWEEN
THE MALE AND FEMALE TEACHER GROUPS

	<u>Male Teachers</u>			<u>Female Teachers</u>		
	Feminine Behaviors	Masculine Behaviors	Mean Total	Feminine Behaviors	Masculine Behaviors	Mean Total
Reinforcers	5.00	2.90	3.95	4.50	4.35	4.43
Punishers	1.50	2.60	2.05	.60	2.55	1.58
Mean Total	3.25	2.75		2.55	3.45	

TABLE 3

REPEATED MEASURES ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF THE SEX-TYPED
CONTINGENCY BEHAVIORS OF MALE AND FEMALE TEACHERS

Source	<u>ss</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>ms</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>P</u>
Contingency Behaviors	225.625	1	225.625	28.356	<.001
Error	.33004	38	.86854		
Sex-Typed Behaviors	1.60	1	1.60	.169	NS
Error	.33004	38	.86854		
Teacher Sex X Contingency Behaviors	9.025	1	9.025	1.134	NS
Error	302.342	38	7.956		
Teacher Sex X Sex-Typed Behaviors	19.60	1	19.60	2.064	NS
Error	360.797	38	9.495		
Contingency Behaviors X Sex-Typed Behaviors	70.225	1	70.225	6.847	<.05
Error	389.731	38	10.256		
Teacher Sex X Contingency Behaviors X Sex-Typed Behaviors	3.025	1	3.025	.295	NS
Error	389.731	38	10.256		

TABLE 4
MEAN SCORES OF PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS OF MALE TEACHERS,
FEMALE TEACHERS, AND MALE ENGINEERS
ON THE ADJECTIVE CHECK LIST

<u>Subjects</u>	<u>Masculine Characteristics</u>					<u>Feminine Characteristics</u>				<u>M-F Score</u>
	<u>ACH</u>	<u>DOM</u>	<u>END</u>	<u>AUT</u>	<u>ABA</u>	<u>NUR</u>	<u>AFF</u>	<u>SUC</u>	<u>DEF</u>	
Male Teachers	10.25	9.65	8.40	0.85	-.15	19.80	21.80	-.70	3.70	-15.30
Female Teachers	10.40	10.20	8.65	-.10	1.00	20.95	22.95	-.35	6.80	-22.20
Male Engineers	14.60	14.60	12.55	1.25	-2.00	19.85	22.40	-2.40	3.55	1.60